

# Sharing the Road

## Tips for Motorist Sharing the Road With Cyclists and Pedestrians

Motorists too, have a responsibility to act in ways to make the road safer for all users. To follow are several points for motorists to consider as they share the road with cyclists and pedestrians:

- As motorists, we're conditioned to watch for large objects, such as vans and tractor trailers. We need to expect and look out for pedestrians and bicyclists on the roadway. Make scanning for cyclists and pedestrians second nature.
- Don't blast your horn when approaching bicyclists and pedestrians. You could startle them and cause an accident. A gentle "toot" from several hundred feet back may be acceptable if the cyclist and/or pedestrian appears unaware of your approach.
- Don't assume cyclists should position themselves on the road as far to the right as possible. Smart cyclists plot a line straight down the roadway 3-4 feet from the curb or parked cars. This allows them space to avoid road hazards and to be more visible to motorists and pedestrians.
- Allow plenty of space when passing a bike. Just as the wind produced by a passing tractor-trailer can pull a car off course, so too can a passing car cause a cyclist to swerve out of control.
- When passing by a cyclist, check over your shoulder to make sure you have allowed adequate distance before merging back in or attempting a right hand turn. Experienced bicyclists can ride 20-25 mph and may be closer than you think.
- New York State law requires motorists to change lanes to pass cyclists if they can't safely do so while staying in the same lane. This means that on curving, narrow roads you should slow down and remain behind the cyclist until you can see far enough down the left-hand lane to pull out and clear the cyclist safely.
- Be aware that when a road is too narrow for cars and bikes to ride safely side by side, bicyclists should ride in or near the center of the lane to discourage motorists from trying to pass.
- Some roads have bike lanes. Cyclists are required to use these lanes, but may enter into your lane in order to execute a left turn.
- Use caution at intersections. A motorist's unexpected turn into the cyclist's travel lane is a common cause of bike-motor vehicle crashes.
- Watch for pedestrians at night and along rural roads. Be especially careful of children "darting-out."
- At intersections, be especially alert for pedestrians, particularly children and seniors, approaching from the opposite direction.
- Motorists should use eye contact to acknowledge the presence of a bicyclist, who has, for instance, stopped at an intersection, or a pedestrian, who is waiting to cross the street, and yield to them when appropriate.

*Provided by NY DOT*